

Forbidden fruit by MyLungsHaveGoodIntentions

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Richie kisses Eddie even though he has a girlfriend.

1. Chapter 1

There were a lot of ways one could have described October 12, 1996. For six year old Olivia Brown, it would have been remembered as the sentimental day she lost her very first tooth. The first official time she was to have the responsibility of placing such an item under her pillow in exchange for a dollar bill. Considered to many one of the first big stepping stones of your youth, right after starting kindergarten or preschool anyway. For 15 year old Tyler Erswhip, October 12 marked the day of his first kiss. Though neither him nor Stacey Frankford knew much of what they were doing. Staceys braces may have pinched Tylers bottom lip enough to cause him to pull back far too quickly and Tyler may have not known where to put his hands, but overall the kiss was not a bad one. In fact, that kiss led to many more, which eventually led to a relationship, which led to the two becoming engaged and eventually ended with Stacey becoming Mrs. Erswhip, though that was all still many years away.

October 12, 1996 to 17 year old Richie Tozier was not as sentimental as Oliva Brown losing a tooth, or the start to a love story like Tyler and Staceys kiss. The day marked one of the worst days of Richies young adulthood, and the official worst day of his high school experience.

It all started spring of 1996, May 11 to be exact. On this day Richie Tozier, who stood at 6 foot 1 with a mop of curls that fall down to his shoulders and a skinny frame, asked out Penelope Waters. She was far shorter then Richies height standing at only 5 foot 4. She had bright blue eyes and golden hair that fell just past her shoulders. Penelope, who insisted upon being called Penny, was the co-captain of the cheerleading squad at Derry Highschool yet still found time to over achieve in every class she was in. She was cute as a button and as sweet as pie. Her and Beverly connected almost instantly when Richie started bringing her around the losers that same week. They talked mostly of magazines and clothing, no surprise.

Bill Denbrough, who didnt believe Penny could possibly agree to date Richie until he 'saw it with his own two eyes,' was never able to get Audra, his girlfriend, to hang out with the losers. The fact Penny was

now hanging around gave him a new hope that Audra would find their clubhouse a more interesting hang out.

Ben Hanscom was ecstatic about Richie and Pennys relationship. Not only was he glad his close friend now had a companion, but selfishly he was happy she brought new company to Bev. Especially beings she was a girl. You see, though Beverly meant no harm to anybody and kept to herself most of the time, she certainly had trouble establishing any sort of relationship with another female. She had simply given up trying due to the fact girls were too catty, as she would put it. Watching the two of them as they laughed and gossiped about different topics warmed Bens heart.

Mike Hanlon was obviously attracted to Penny. Every time he saw her he would smile ear to ear, and every once in a while would stop what he was doing to glance at her. The losers eventually started joking around saying Mike was going to take Richies girl, to which Richie would simply respond 'blow me.'

Stanley Uris, Richies best friend, was surprisingly disapproving. He didnt voice his feelings much, but every once in a while he would make sly comments about how they should not be together. Of course he would never do so in front of Pennys face due to the fact that would just upset the poor girl. All of the losers were shocked when Stan first voiced his opinion on their relationship, that is all except Richie himself.

Once Bill had addressed the situation in private with Richie, asking if it ever bothered him that Stan was not supportive of him and Penny.

"I dont really give a shit" Richie shrugged. "We've talked about it and honestly he's entitled to his opinion. I get it."

Bill was tempted to ask just why Stan had said he felt that way and what about it Richie understood, but found it better not to comment. After all this was between them.

Eddie Kaspbrak, Bills best friend and the last member of the losers club didnt know Penny all too well. Sure, that was his fault that he never really took the time to get to know her but why would he? She was just some girl Richie would probably get bored of and end up

leaving. After all, that was exactly what happened in 9th grade with Felicity Roxwell. He thought Penny was super friendly but he didn't care much about that. Sure, she was beautiful but he didn't really care much about that either. He figured all he had to do was be cordial with her until Richie simply had enough of being with her, then things would be back to the way they were.

Unfortunately for Eddie that was not the case.

One month turned into two months and two turned into three yet Penny was still there. It was now the start of September, almost four whole months later and Richie was still dating Penelope Waters.

It was a Thursday afternoon on September 7th when a decision was made that started the path that could possibly lead to no good. School had been over for quite some time, two or three hours at most. Richie was home alone like he was most days. His parents usually seemed to favor work over family time. He was laying on his back holding his english book above his head trying to focus on the words but as his stomach growled, he realized it would be nearly impossible to continue on without food. "Fuck" he muttered to himself as he placed the book to his side and pushed himself up. He strolled into the kitchen flinging open the fridge with ease and staring inside. Unfortunately the only items that looked back were a spoiled gallon of milk, a half stick of butter and left overs from who knows how many days ago. "It'll have to do" he thought as he picked up the old meatloaf. However after taking a whiff he gagged and immediately threw the food in to the garbage.

Following shutting the fridge he picked up the house phone and dialed Eddie's number. He was praying Sonia would not be the one to answer.

"Kasprak residence" A familiar voice spoke.

"Hey Eds"

"That's not my name" Eddie sighed into the phone. "What do you want, Rich?"

"Did you eat yet? I'm starving and my place has nothing."

“My mom cooked chili but I dont really think its edible.”

“So you’d wanna go get food with me?”

“I dont want my mom to be upset I’m going out to eat after she cooked..” eddie spoke softly.

“So youd rather go hungry the rest of the night?” Richie question earning him no answer in response. “Just tell her you’re going to Big Bills for an hour. She’ll never know a thing.”

Silence lingered on the other end of the phone but only for a few moments. “Ok” Eddie agreed.

“On my way” Richie smiled to himself before slamming the phone back onto its base. He ran upstairs and threw on a jacket, jeans and a beanie before booking it out of his house. On his way to Eddies his stomach grew angrier with him. It took but only a few seconds for Eddie to run out to Richies truck after he pulled up. He must have been watching for him and for that Rich was thankful.

“Hey Eddie Spaghetti” Richie smiled.

“Where are we going, Trashmouth?”

“Interrogating right off the bat?” Richie questioned as he pulled out of his parking spot. No reply. “Tonys Pizza.”

Eddie smiled to that. Everyone in Derry knew Tonys Pizza was the best pizza place around. Hell, it was the best pizza place on the whole planet.

“I knew thatd make you happy”

“I’m starving.” Eddie admitted.

“You were really gonna go on like that until tomorrow just because you didnt wanna hurt your moms feelings?” Eddie shrugged. “Well thats bullshit. You shouldnt have to go hungry just because your mom cant cook. You know.. You should be grateful you have a friend like me, Eds.”

Taking the first bite of his pizza Eddie could not have agreed more. There was just something so amazing about the flavor and how light the cheese was. Both boys managed to eat two slices, Richies treat, before leaving Tonys.

“So much better to feel full then hungry, huh?” Richie smirked at Eddie as he started his truck.

“Do you ever stop talking trashmouth?”

“No.”

Richie took off down the road. “Whats been up with you lately? You seem different.”

Eddie glanced at him out of the corner of his eye. “Its nothing, Rich.”

“Doesn’t seem like nothing” Richie commented nonchalantly. “I dont know Eds I just feel like lately youve been.. shit I dont even know how to describe it.. I guess keeping your distance from me.”

“If I was doing that then why would I have gone out with you for dinner?”

“Because you miss me and regret distancing yourself already.”

“I guess.”

“So you arent denying it?”

“Im not agreeing with it.”

“You act different now.” Richie blurted loudly. “That is a stone cold fact. Stan even agreed with me when I asked him if he noticed.”

“You said something to Stan?” Eddie asked surprised whipping his head to look at Richie.

“And he agreed.”

“Why would you mention anything to Stan?”

“I tell Stan everything.”

Eddie sighed.

“Eds.. I just want things to go back to normal.”

“Me too” Eddie mumbled.

“What do you mean you too? I havnt changed.” Richie retorted putting Eddie on the spot. Honestly when Eddie made that comment he wasnt expecting Richie to hear him let alone respond.

“You’re different.”

“No im not?” Richie denied as he pulled up out front of Eddies house. He parked his truck and flicked the headlights off before turning to face Eddie.

“Ever since you and Penny got together you have been.” He spoke quietly.

“This is about Penny?”

“I just- things arent the way they were and thats ok, Rich. It really is. But you cant expect things to be normal when they’ve already changed.”

“But nothings really changed—“

“Yes it has, Rich.” Eddie said with some heat to his voice. He was obviously frustrated for having to talk about his feelings on this subject. “You dont-we dont- ..” Eddie sighed. “I feel like you replaced me with her.”

“I would never.”

“It feels that way.”

“But what is different?”

Eddie pushed his lips into a thin line before opening his mouth to speak again. “Just dumb little things that I shouldnt even care about I guess.”

“Like what?” Richie spoke softly as he questioned further, this time though he stretched a little more towards Eddie. Not so much to where it was obvious but enough to where he was now lingering over his center console.

“Like the hammock.” Eddie admitted quickly. He had to say it before he could think about it. He knew if he did, he wouldnt have spoke those words.

“You miss cuddling with me?” Richie asked surprised, smiling in response to Eddie nodding. Without asking Richie leaned closer into Eddies space and placed his lips on the other boys. Eddie didnt respond at first due the initial shock of what was happening, but within seconds Eddie was kissing Richie back. It wasnt long before the kiss became a little more heated, open mouths and teeth clashing. It also was not too long after that that Eddie had pulled himself back away from Richie. Realization becoming apparent.

“Fuck” Richie mumbled eyes locked with Eddies. “I wanted to do that for so long.”

“You have a girlfriend” was all Eddie had to say in response. “Why did you kiss me when youre in a relationship?”

Richie couldnt come up with words to say. Eddie refused to wait any longer and exited Richies truck slamming the door. Nobody called after him as he went inside and up to his bedroom. He cried himself to sleep knowing he finally got the thing he longed for the most but he couldnt have it.

2. Chapter 2

Summary for the Chapter:

Comments and critiques welcome

Eddie woke up for school in a slight daze. He tossed and turned all night and got at most a collective three hours of sleep. It was odd how feelings had made him feel physically ill, a sickness no amount of white blood cells could fight off. He brushed his teeth and began to get ready for his day wishing he could just stay in bed. He thought about cashing in a sick day but knew it would most likely result in a hospital trip provoked by his mother. He went downstairs to wait for Bill to arrive to pick him up. Even since Bill got his license he opted to pick up Eddie and Ben every morning before school, Richie picked up Beverly and Stanley.

Sonia Kasbrak marched into the living room stomping harder than usual. She stood in front of Eddie looking down at where he sat and crossed her arms.

“Is everything ok?” He asked.

“You know how I feel about Richard Tozier.” She scoffed.

All he could think is she must have seen them out front of the house last night. Eddie's eyes widened when he realized that if that was in fact true, then she must have seen them kiss as well. His heart started racing at the realization. She would surely lecture him on the horrors of AIDS and insist Eddie must be sick if he was willing to kiss another boy.

“I know” was all Eddie came up with as a response.

Time went slow as he patiently waited for his mother to begin speaking again. Whatever was about to come out of her mouth wasn't going to be good for him.

“Why is he driving you to school today?” She questioned “Where is Bill Denbrough?”

Relief flooded through his body at the fact he was in the clear for last night. He felt like he could breath again until it clicked that holy shit Richie is outside of his house right now and he actually has to face him. "Richies here?" Eddie questioned at first. Sonia raised her eyebrows and opened her mouth to comment before he spoke again. "I mean, Bill is sick so he was nice enough to pick me up for school."

"Then why did you just seem surprised he is here?" She questioned with furrowed brows.

"I just didnt realize hed get here early is all. I should probably get going." He stood up and walked by her when—

"Eddie bear!" He looked back at her thinking she was about to offer to drive him herself. "You forgot something" she said tapping her cheek with her pointer finger. He walked back over to her and kissed her cheek.

"Love you, mommy" he mumbled before rushing out the front door. "What are you doing here?" He said approaching the truck. Richie was leaning against it finishing up a cigarette. "You know, my mom already hates you Rich. If she looks out and sees you smoking shell probably charge out here in a panic."

"She knows I smoke, Eds."

"Yea but shes not really happy to see you here this morning."

"Probably because I ignored her bootycall last night."

Eddie looked at Richie curiously. "What exactly are you doing here?"

"Were playin hookie" Richie smiled. Eddie didnt look as thrilled.

"What? No! We cant do that!"

"And why not?" Richie asked flicking his cigarette butt.

"School like just started Rich.. its our senior year which is arguably the most important year of high school."

He shrugged in response. "Well get caught up monday."

“Dont you have to pick up Ben and Stan?”

“Bills gonna grab them. By the way I mentioned he didnt have to swing here today. Covered all the bases.”

Eddie sighed. “Richie.. If this is about last night—“

“It is most certainly about last night. Get in.” He opened the passenger side door and moved his hand in the direction of the seat almost as if he was showing off something. Though it was against his better judgement Eddie obliged allowing Richie to shut the door once he was properly in place. The driver side flew open shortly after and the two took off.

“So where are we going?”

“Just my house. Parents arent home so we’ll be able to talk there.”

Eddie didnt comment. In fact the rest of the car ride was filled with an almost awkward silence. Richie must have felt as nervous as him because this was the only time he ever let a space sit quiet. Once parked in the driveway of the Tozier residence, both the boys hopped out of the vehicle and proceeded into the building. They sat on the sofa in the living room, Richie sitting too close for comfort.

“Ok I’m just gonna come out and say this..” he said as seriously as he had ever spoke. “I really like you, Eds.”

“We had to skip school and have a legitimate sit down for this? I already figured that out, dipshit.”

“I mean I did drop a subtle hint.”

“A tiny one.”

“And you obviously like me.”

Eddie sat quiet.

“C’mon Eds, you pretty much admitted it last night with that whole hammock thing. Thats the only reason I kissed you.”

“So the only reason you kissed me is because I didnt bite my tongue when I should of?”

“I did it because you confirmed something I never suspected.” Richie smiled.

“Last night you said you wanted to kiss me for a while. How long?”

“Why is the time length of that relevant?”

“Just tell me.”

Richie ran a hand through his hair and looked away as he answered “almost 7 years.”

“Why didnt you ever tell me?” Eddie questioned speaking softly. His mind was running a million miles a minute. It was so obvious to him now, how did he never notice before?

“Because I was scared!” Richie answered as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “Seriously? You think back when we were 10 I didnt know how not normal it is for me to like guys? I was young not stupid. Same reason I never mentioned it since I realized. Not to mention it would have completely fucked up our relationship if I told you and it wasn’t reciprocated.”

Eddie nodded his head. He understood exactly where Richie was coming from. Eddie had known he was gay for around four years now. He had been head over heels for Richard Tozier for every single one of them. He had thought about telling him once when they were alone in the club house, their bodies tangled together like two perfect puzzle pieces. Richie had looked at him and smiled and all Eddie wanted to do was kiss him and tell him how beautiful he was. Obviously, once reality struck him he kept quiet. ‘If you want to share more moments like this with Richie you cant tell him how much youre attracted to him. It will scare him off and change everything’ his mind had told him. It was almost laughable now that Eddie knew Richie was probably thinking the same thing.

Just as it did back then, reality once again struck Eddie. “Penny.” He looked into Richies eyes as he spoke now. “What about Penny?”

“Mike can have her” he joked. It was a horrible joke.

“Im serious Richie. I felt horrible all night because of what happened.”

“Really? Cause I slept like a baby..” Eddie furrowed his brows at him. “Look, Eds..” Richie spoke as he readjusted the way he was sitting. He moved an inch closer to Eddie and let their knees touch. “I’ve had a thing for you for almost half of my life. I would hands down choose you over anyone else as long as you let me.”

Eddie nodded once more. “I just dont want you to hurt her.”

“Eddie” Richie said smiling and pinching his cheek “You’re so cute cute cute.”

Eddie smacked his hand awake from his face and so Richie rested it on his knee instead.

“Can we try this?” He asking gesturing with his free hand between the two of them. For the third time, Eddie nodded in response.

Richie leaned in and kissed him. Eddie pulled away.

“We can try this when you arent in a relationship.”

“C’mon Eds. I’m gonna end things with her I promise. I’m not even that into her.” Silence filled the room for a moment. “I promise.” Richie spoke again.

“When?”

“This week. I’ll talk to her this week.”

Eddie thought about it for a moment as he looked at Richie. He wanted to kiss the other boy again. Last night when their lips touched he had felt something, he knew he did. Even the brief kiss they just shared that lasted a mere second felt euphoric. This time it was him to lean in and initiate the kiss. He knew in the back of his head it was wrong to start something with someone who was seeing someone else, but he said he was going to end it right? Why postpone something just because of some title that wouldnt even exist in a few

days.

Eddie could feel Richie smile into the kiss and he absolutely melted. He adored that smile and to know it was there because of him, because of what they were doing, no other words could describe that. Richie leaned in closer placing his hand on Eddies shoulder. With the little bit of applied pressure Eddie could tell what Richie was doing and he obliged. Eddie was pushed onto his back as Richie positioned himself above him never breaking this kiss. The new weight on top of Eddie was eagerly welcomed, both of their mouths opening to deepen the kiss. They stayed like that for quite some time, just kissing and enjoying this new thing that had started up. Even afterwards, Richie still laid on top of Eddie, Eddies arm around his shoulders and his hand playing with Richies curls. Richie had an arm slug over Eddies chest and kept his head on the other boys shoulders. Their legs were intertwined like they would do in the hammock, but both boys would admit the couch was a much comfier alternative.

3. Chapter 3

“You reek of cigarettes” Sonia Kasprak commented in disgust as Eddie walked through his front door just after 3:00. “Thank goodness it’s Friday so Bill Denbrough can rest and be ready to drive you Monday. I’m not sure just how comfortable I’d feel knowing you were riding with Mr. Tozier yet again tomorrow.”

“He didnt smoke in the car, mommy. In fact he made it a point not to because I was there.” He commented in a small attempt to clear Richies name in even the slightest.

“You know you have delicate lungs. No matter in the car or out of the car, Eddie Bear. That young man should not be putting you in harms way.”

Eddie nodded. There was never any point in arguing with his mother. She would always find a reason that she was right in any given situation. If she was a lawyer, Eddie knew they would be undeniably wealthy for she would never lose a case.

“Do you have any homework for the weekend?” She questioned.

“No, not this weekend mommy.”

“Well alright then.”

He went up to his bedroom happy she decided not to interrogate any farther on the subject. Though Eddie hated the fact Sonia babied him and was extremely uptight when it came to his health, she was still his mother and he had a hard time deceiving her. His father had died when he was just a kid from cancer, and Eddie himself was a sickly baby. He knew the reason she was so crazy about keeping him safe was due to the fact she loved him, but he would by lying if he said he wasn’t sick of it.

On the plus side, because of his mother being a complete hypochondriac, he had a telephone in his room. He didnt know anybody else his age with this privilege, let alone having it since he was 13. Sure, it shared the same line as the other telephone in his

household but it still gave him some sort of privacy. The only reason Sonia had insisted one be installed is because of the pure fact that it was easy access to call for help if he ever had an asthma attack or some other type of dyer health issue.

“But I wont be able to call for help if I’m having an asthma attack?” Eddie had questioned when his mother had first put her plan into action.

“Eddie Bear the police will be able to trace the call.” Sonia corrected. “All you will have to do is dial the number.”

Eddie didnt argue any farther. Her thought process on this made absolutely no sense to him but if it made her feel safe that was all that mattered. Richie had told Eddie it was a set up when he mentioned it to the losers.

“She just wants you to think you have privacy while shes really downstairs listening in.”

“I dont know, Richie” Bill had commented. “Sh-She doesnt usually have a hidden agenda when shes tr-tr-trying to keep Eddie s-s-safe.”

“Bullshit.” Richie commented as he drew in the dirt with a stick. “Totally a set up.”

Eddie never knew the truth, but as far as he knew she never once in the last four years listened in on any of his phone calls. Maybe once or twice she picked up the other line by accident to use it. It was always obvious though because you would hear the numbers punching in before the sound of Sonias heavy breathing while waiting for the ringing to start.

Eddie picked up the phone and dialed Bills number. The phone answered third ring.

“Denbrough residence Sharon speaking.”

“Hello Mrs. Denbrough, is Bill home?”

“Yes he is, Eddie. Just one moment please, Dear.” He could hear the muffled yells for Bill who ran to the phone quickly.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Bill. Whatcha doin today?”

“Eddie! I was just going to c-c-call you. Richie told me last night you guys wernt c-coming to school today. Is everything ok?”

“Thank god you didnt call, Bill. My mom would of freaked out. I told her you were sick.”

“Whyd you do that?”

“Richie wanted to play hookie today and my mom wanted an explanation why he was here to pick me up instead of you” he said quietly. Even though he was in his own bedroom he knew his mother would be furious if she found out.

“But school just sta-started. Why did you guys c-cut?”

At this moment Eddie wasnt sure how to answer. Bill was his absolute best friend. They’ve been best friends since the first grade, before ever even knowing Richie or Stan. At this moment, Eddie needed to decide how to answer: truth or lie. He wanted to tell Bill the truth. Bill was the only loser who had any idea of his attraction to the same sex. Except of course now Richie. Bill wouldnt judge him for skipping school to spend time with Richie. What he would judge him for however is doing what he did while Richie was with Penny. Penny, who was not only friendly with all of the losers but close friends with Audra and Bev. Penny who would be devastated if she found out Richie not only cheated on her but with a guy. But with HIM.

Eddie gulped. Lying it had to be. “Him and his dad had a rough night.” Fuck this felt wrong. Not only was he lying to Bill but he was using the fact Richies dad sometimes took out his stress from work on him as the excuse. All of the losers knew he did so it wasnt like he was telling him a secret of Richies. Every time he showed up with a new black eye or a cut lip it went without saying that Wentworth Tozier had been the reason behind it.

“Was it bad?” Bill asked. Fuck this really felt so wrong.

“No. He just didnt want to deal with school and I didnt want him to be alone.”

“You’re a good f-friend Eddie.”

Yea such a good friend Eddie thought. “Thanks.”

“Did you w-wanna go to the cl-c-club house tonight? Were all gonna be there plus Audra and I th-think Penny.”

“Richies going?” Eddie questioned.

“Stan told me he was. Bev is bringing jello.”

Jello AKA the losers code name for alcohol. This made it easier to talk about on the phone without any parents getting suspicious. The losers drank together almost every other weekend. Beverly, though she was only 17, was served at the liquor store just outside of Derry. Richie never minded driving her there due to the fact drinking was probably his favorite thing to do. It always concerned Eddie and Stan a little. They were probably the only two who took notice of just how much Richie tended to drink every time they did.

“What time?”

“Six”

“Alright” Eddie agreed. “I’ll be there”

“S- S- See you at s-six” Bill said before hanging up the phone.

Immediately after hanging up the phone rang. Eddie answered before the end of the first ring.

“Kaspbrak residence.”

“Finally!” Richie yelled. “I’ve called you like four times.”

“I was on the phone with Bill.”

“Good ol’ Big Bill. Just how is the lad?”

“He umm.. He asked why we skipped school.”

“Sooo.. whatd you say? Like did you tell him orr..”

“I lied.” Eddie confirmed.

“Yea, I didnt tell Stan either when he asked me where we were.”

“Bill mentioned you were gonna be at the clubhouse tonight?”

“Well me and Bev are stopping at Lloyds first so she can run in, but yea after that were heading there.”

“He said Penny was going?”

“You can blame Bev for that. I havnt talked to her all day.”

“I know dipshit you were with me.”

“Speaking of you, want to come with Bev and me to grab the liquor? Im headed her way in like an hour and were gonna head out. I can grab you first if you want.”

“I dont know, Chee. My mom might have a heart attack if she sees you picking me up twice in one day. She told me I smelled like a cigarette when I got home.”

“You’re mom is so full of shit.”

“I knew she was gonna comment on something. She wouldnt pass it up.” Eddie agreed.

“She hates me so much” Richie laughed.

“She doesnt have a reason to. She just doesnt really know you.”

“Ehh I cant say I blame her, I left her for her son.”

“Beep beep, Richie.”

“I mean anyone would of.. Have you seen you?”

Eddie blushed at this. “You still have a girlfriend you know..”

“I told you i’m gonna take care of it.”

“I know.”

Richie paused before speaking again. “How do you think everyones gonna react?”

This was the exact topic Eddie tried to avoid thinking about. He wasn't sure exactly how the Losers would react through all of this and it scared him. It wasn't just as simple as Richie leaving Penny for him. It was coming out, it was breaking Pennys heart, it was not knowing how the losers felt about two guys being together.

“Im not sure.” He admitted. “I think Bills gonna wanna be happy for me but it's gonna be hard for him. Especially because of Audra. How about Stan?”

“He'll be expecting it.” Richie answered confidently.

“Wait, what?”

“Hes known for a while now just how much I adore you Eddie Spaghetti.”

“Yea but hes expecting us to start something with each other?”

“I mean maybe not expecting it but I think he wont be surprised if it happens.”

And it finally made sense to Eddie why Stan felt the way he did about Richies relationship. “Is that why he doesn't like you and Penny together?”

“He knows my heart belongs to someone else.”

“So why did you ever even ask her out? Isn't that kinda messed up to date someone you dont really wanna be with.”

“I didn't even think there was a chance you would like me back. I was just trying to move on and it blew up in my face.” Richie sighed into the phone. “I think Bevs gonna be the most upset when we split.”

“Its a safe bet” Eddie agreed.

“Im gonna end things today but I feel like we shouldnt tell anyone about us. Not right away anyway.”

“Yea, we should give it time before we tell the Losers. Let them think you’re just breaking up with Penny because its not working.”

“Exactly. One step at a time.”

“Yea” Eddie nodded even though Richie couldnt see him. “I think I’m gonna take a shower real quick, Rich. I’ll see you tonight?”

“Whatever you say, Spaghetti man. I’ll be thinking about you in the shower in the mean time.”

Eddie rolled his eyes. “See ya tonight.”He said hanging up the telephone.

Time flew by pretty quick. All Eddie did was blink and six was right around the corner. He walked to Bills, his mother thinking he was headed to Stans, and the two of them walked to the clubhouse together. On nights where drinking was involved Bill, using his better judgement, refused to drive. Richie on the other hand was not so smart. Him and Bev arrived not too long after everyone else jumping out of the truck and pulling up the flat door hidden on the ground.

“We have party favors” Richie yelled as he marched down the ladder, Bev tailgating.

“Two bottles” Bev chimed in.

“You guys never fail to impress” Audra said grinning as she stood wrapped in Bills arms.

“Ill get you a c-cup?” Bill spoke into her ear.

“Mixed with soda please, babe.”

He kissed her on the cheek and walked towards where Richie and Stan stood. He grabbed two cups and undid the cap, pouring a little over a shots worth into each.

“How you doing Ri-Richie.”

“Doin fine young chap” Richie started in a British accent, grabbing the bottle from Bills hand before he could place it back on the table. “Just ready to dive into tonight’s festivities.” He smiled pouring a way more generous amount from himself.

“Maybe pace yourself tonight, Rich?” Stan locked eyes with him.

“Pip pip. Cheerio good fella” Richie said beginning to sip his drink and walking away. He headed towards the direction of Eddie but was stopped by someone grabbing his arm. He looked to see none other then Penny smiling at him.

“Hey cutie.” She said taking his cup from his hand to take a sip. Her face instantly scrunched up. “Jesus Richie this is straight alcohol.”

He didnt say a word. Just looked her in her eyes and drank a gulp of his drink and smiled.

“Where were you today? I waited by your locker but Bev said you wernt coming in?”

“I had better stuff to do” he shrugged.

“I wish you would of told me.” She giggled. “I would have went straight to class.”

“Maybe just start doing that.”

“What?”

“Going straight to class.”

“But then I wont see you between classes?”

Richie took a sip and nodded, wiping his mouth in his arm after lowering the cup. “Yea.”

Penny let go of his arm and Audra ran up to them with a second cup in her hand shoving it towards Penny. “Girl why havn’t you gotten yourself a drink yet?”

Penny was still staring at Richie and Richie at Penny.

"Is everything ok?" Audra asked now realizing how tense it felt between the two. Richie walked away as Audra started spouting a line of questions towards Penny. He walked up to Eddie who was now accompanied by Bill.

"What was going on over there?" Bill asked furrowing his eyebrows and motioning his cup towards where he came. Richie looked in the direction Bill was looking and both Penny and Audra were staring at Richie.

Eddie looked at Richie and then back towards the two girls who were once again engaged in conversation, not just with each other but also with Bev.

"Dont know" Richie answered looking into his cup and swirling it around before drinking what was left.

Beverly walked up just as he was lowering the cup. "Why were you being an ass to Penny?" She asked.

"Why did you invite her?" He asked back. Bev looked back noticing the two girls staring at them as they talked. She grabbed Richie by the hand dragging him towards the ladder. "Bev..." he started to say.

"Lets go smoke, Trashmouth."

That brought a smile to his face. "My god do you have a way with words, women."

They climbed up exiting the clubhouse and closed the door. Each lit a cigarette and Richie sat on the ground staring up at the sky. Bev could see his cheeks were red and his eyes slightly glazed. She sat next to him.

"Are you drunk already?"

"Fuck no" he answered truthfully. "Im just feeling nice. Feel like my mind is clear." He took a long drag of his cigarette and never broke his gaze towards the sky. "Suns started to set." He said looking at the colors in the distance.

"Whats happening with you and Penny?" She asked once more.

“Penny said you told her to stop waiting for you between classes?”

“I’m an asshole” he said moving his eyes to her.

“But whats going on?”

“Bev. I really really dont want you to hate me.”

“I could never hate you, Richie.” She said placing her hand on his knee. They sat in silence for a few minutes after that just smoking their cigarettes. Bev didnt push him to talk anymore and Richie was trying to find the right words to say.

“I just—“ he ran a hand through his curls before continuing. “I started bringing her around and now everyone likes her. And now I just want her to go away but that cant happen.” Bev tightened her lips into a line and nodded to let him know she was listening. “I’m breaking up with her tonight.”

“What happened to make you feel this way?”

“I just cant be me when I’m with her.”

“Ok.” She answered nodding her head. “I wont invite her to our Loser hangouts anymore. I wouldnt have tonight if I’d of known.”

“Thanks.” He answered throwing his arm over her shoulders.

“I’m sorry that you felt like you couldnt talk to me about this without me being mad at you.”

“I just know you and her are friends and I dont want to come between you guys.”

“If she cant handle me being friends with both of you she isnt a real friend.” Bev smiled at him. “I will always have your back Richie Tozier. Always.”

Richie smiled and nodded. “Were you ever scared? You know of what would happen if you and Haystack ended shit?”

“Ben and I would never”

“Hypothetically if you did” Richie somewhat yelled over her.

“I guess I never really thought about it. Our relationship afterward would depend on why we broke up.”

“Regardless it would make shit a little awkward.”

“It would” she agreed. “But I’m hoping we’ll never have to experience that.”

“You won’t” Richie stated. “I know you two are meant for each other.”

She smiled “Me too.” Bev flicked her cigarette butt and Richie took his final drag of his own.

“If I had more alcohol I’d say we should just hang out up here for a while.” He smiled.

“Maybe next cigarette.” She responded standing up.

Richie and Bev headed back into the clubhouse, Penny walking up to them as they did.

“Can we talk?” She asked looking at Richie.

“I’m listening” he responded as he poured more liquor into his cup.

“Are you like, mad at me or something?”

“No” he shook his head.

“Then what’s your problem?”

Not wanting to deal with this right now Richie grabbed a spare cup and shoved it into her hands. “Please just.. just have fun tonight. I’m sorry I’m coming off as a dick. We’ll talk later, ok?” Because how could he just end things now in front of everyone? It wasn’t his job to ruin the rest of her night. She nodded and poured her own drink before returning back to where Audra and Bev were.

“Hey.” Ben said approaching Richie who was leaned up against the

wall taking a generous sip from his cup.

“Hey.” Richie answered. He could feel his tongue growing slightly numb from the alcohol.

“Are you ok? Penny said you were acting weird towards her..”

“Boy, word sure does travel fast in this here bunker.”

“Did you want to talk about it?”

“Haystack, I cant do this right now. Please excuse me while I get drunk.” He said walking away and flopping into the hammock. He opened a comic book and began to skim through.

“Cards, anyone?” Audra motioned holding up a deck. This caught everyones interest except for Richies who was content where he was. Eddie walked over and motioned at the comic. “You’re really gonna sit here alone and read a comic? Come play cards, Trashmouth.”

“If its just me and you and the game is strip poker count me in.” He smiled looking up at Eddie over the pages.

“Seriously, Chee. Come hang out.”

“I’m good here, Eddie my love. But go enjoy yourself” he said motioning his hand through the air almost as if to wave him away.

“Are youu sure?”

Richie nodded. “Im just gonna hang out here for a little.”

“Alright, Rich.” Eddie said before retreating back to the others who were now sitting in a circle.

By no later then 8pm Richie was flagged. His body was sprawled as much as it could be in the hammock, one arm dangling out and the other draped over his face covering his eyes.

Mike was the first to notice him after standing up to get another drink. “Is he ok guys?” He asked to the others. They were so wrapped up in their game that nobody took notice to just how much he was

drinking or just when he got so wasted.

Bev walked up to him and crouched down beside him. "Richie?"

"Hmmm.."

"Are you ok?"

"Mmmmmmm."

"He always drinks too much." Stan commented flatly as he threw a card down. The others brought their eyes to him. "Usually just not this fast."

Penny, though she was not exactly sober herself ran over to him. "Baby, maybe you should drink some water?"

"Eddie?" He half mumbled out a whine.

"No Richie, its me." She smiled caressing his cheek with her hand. "Maybe we should get him home?" Penny suggested.

"His dad isnt exactly fond of him coming home drunk." Stan stated.

"His trucks here." Bev mentioned

"He drove?" Eddie shouted. "Is he stupid!?"

"He c-can come back for th-that tomorrow. Hes not dr-dr-driving." Bill said taking over his usual leader mentality. "Hes gonna h-have to stay with someone t-t-tonight he cant go h-home like this."

"I havnt drank" Stan mentioned. "I just dont have a license."

"Well what good is that, Stan?" Eddie commented standing up and grabbing his bottle of water. He brought it to Richie.

"Rich I need you to drink some water" he spoke softly.

"Mmmmmmmhm" Richie answered not moving from his position.

"Maybe splash some on his face?" Mike suggested.

Eddie attempted just that yet there was no reaction. "He might just have to sleep it off."

"Stan do you k-know how to drive?" Bill asked

"Yea." He nodded.

"I th-think you should just dr-d-drive him. Take his truck."

"The chances of you getting pulled over are slim to none" Penny commented. "As long as you dont speed and stop at the stop lights that is."

"Where do I take him since I cant take him back to his house like this?"

"He can stay with me" Bev offered. "My aunt loves him so she wont mind. He just better not throw up everywhere."

"Thatll work." Bill confirmed. "Lets just all call it a ni-night. Stan you g-get Richies keys and open the b-b-back door. Eddie and I will try to h-help him up the ladder."

It was more difficult then anticipated. Sure Richie was skinny but he was also extremely tall. In the end, Eddie had to climb to the top and hold Richies hand to ensure he wouldnt fall while climbing. Bill stood under him, hands held out to help him stay steady and to catch him incase such a thing did occur. The two helped him make it to his back seat without him so much as falling once.

"I'll go with you guys" Eddie said looking at Bev and Stan. "Just to help make sure he gets into your house ok."

Bev smiled and nodded "Yea. Thanks."

"Eddie c-call me when you get home" Bill stated seriously.

"I will."

"Bye guys" Bev waved followed by everyone else saying their goodbyes. Bev sat shotgun and Eddie slid next to Richie in the back. Stan sat in the drivers seat and took a deep breath after starting the

engine.

“Are you sure you know what you’re doing, Stan?” Eddie questioned.

“Yea,” Stan responded quickly “Richies tried to teach me a few times”.

“Tried!?”

He put the car into drive and slowly tapped the gas. It took a couple minutes of panicking before Eddie realized Stan was going to be fine. The rest of the way Eddie had his hand in Richies curls playing with the strands.

It didnt take long after arriving at Bevs for her aunt to come outside to investigate the ruckus. What she saw was Stanley, Eddie and Bev huddled around peering into the backseat of a truck. “Whats going on?” She questioned the three of them, all three whipping around to face her at the same time.

“Hi Aunt Charlotte” Stan spoke as Eddie waved at her.

“Can Richie stay the night? He cant really go home right now.” Bev asked a little too blunt.

“Is everything alright, Beverly?” Her Aunt Charlotte questioned.

“You have to promise you wont be mad.”

“Where is he?

Eddie and Stan moved out of the way so Aunt Charlotte had full view. Richie was sitting up slumped against the passenger seat in front of him. His eyes were squinted open and he half smiled at her. “Aunt Chaaaaaar” he spoke dragging out her name.

Her eyes whipped to Bev. “So help me god, Beverly if you kids have been drinking and driving.”

“Stan drove.” She answered quickly.

“I didnt drink a drop, Aunt Charlotte” he put his hands up in front of

him in defense.

She eyed him up and down. "Well alright. Help Richie inside and I'll give the two of you a ride home."

"Yes mam" Eddie replied. Getting Richie to the spare room of a rancher was a thousand times easier then bringing him up a ladder. Stan and Eddie helped him flop onto the bed and Eddie began working at his shoes to take them off.

"He shouldnt need to be baby sat every time." Stan spoke as Eddie untied his shoelaces. "Hes never gotten this bad but hes usually not much better"

"Fuck off" Richie mumbled.

"Whatever. I'm gonna head to the bathroom" Stan informed Eddie on his way out of the room. Eddie placed Richies shoes next to the bed.

"Can you stay?" Richie slurred looking at Eddie.

"I've gotta go home, Chee." Eddie spoke as he reached out to rub his arm.

Richie grabbed his hand. "Aunt Char wont care. I just wanna lay with you."

"I told my mom I'd be home by 10 Rich. You know how she is."

"Mmmya" he answered closing his eyes.

Aunt Charlotte rounded the corner with a trashcan and glass of water causing Eddie to suddenly release Richies hand. "I brought these for him incase he gets sick." She said looking at Eddie suspiciously.

"Um, thanks Aunt Charlotte." He said grabbing the items from her and placing them next to the bed.

"We should probably get going."

Eddie nodded and turned back to Richie. "I gotta go Rich but I'll check on you tomorrow ok?"

“Miss you already.” He mumbled not opening his eyes.

“C’mon now, he’ll be fine.”

Eddie obliged and the two made their way towards the front door, Stan who had just exited the restroom joined them along with Bev.

“Keep an eye on him until I get home Beverly.” She mentioned as she grabbed her jacket off the hook and threw it on. “C’mon boys.”

Stanleys house was first on the way. An awkward silence filled the car as they drove, neither boy knowing much of what to say. “Thank you so much, Aunt Charlotte” Stan smiled once she pulled up out front of his house. He exited the back seat as he spoke.

“Of course, sweetie. Get some sleep.” She watched as he walked inside before they pulled off to their next destination.

“I’m sorry about Richie” Eddie spoke. “Thank you for letting him stay the night.”

“You and I both know what would have happened if I sent that boy home.” She spoke side eyeing him. Eddie looked at her confused on how she knew. She must have known what he was thinking. “Him and I talk, ya know. Hes a good kid.”

“He is.” Eddie agreed. “I’m glad he has you to talk to.”

“We talk pretty often. Truthfully I probably know more about that boy then I need to know. The one thing I’m unaware of though is whats going on between the two of you.”

Eddies heart skipped a beat at that. She looked at him once more waiting for an answer.

“What are you talking about?” He questioned. Playing dumb didnt always work but his fingers were crossed that this one time it would.

“My eyes and ears work. Maybe not as good as they used to but they work none the less. I seen you two holding hands and heard the words being said.”

Eddie didnt comment. Maybe if he ignored her she would drop the subject.

“Is he still dating that girl?” She questioned.

“Yes.” Eddie answered, twiddling his fingers.

She paused for a moment. “Well do any of the others know about this thing you guys have goin on?”

Eddie thought about denying it. Telling her she was assuming things and to stop trying to get answers that weren’t there. He opened his mouth to comment, but then something in him caused himself to stop and instead shake his head. “No. Yesterday was the first time I told him how I felt.”

“I see” she said as they pulled up out front of Eddies house. Charlotte turned to face him. “Well, Here we are” she said gesturing to his house.

“Thanks” Eddie replied grabbing the handle of the door. He pushed it open and jumped out.

“Eddie?”

“Yeah?”

“If you ever need to talk about anything my door is always open for you kids.”

“Thanks” he smiled shutting the door and running up to house. He entered and she took off.

4. Chapter 4

Summary for the Chapter:

Sorry this chapter is so short

Richie awoke in the middle of the night completely parched. He had never been happier to see a glass of water before in his life. He chugged half of it in just a few gulps while thinking how smart he was to have made himself a glass before going to bed. It was only after resting the drink back on the nightstand that he realized he was not home. He crept out of the bed and walked to the bathroom still fully clothed in the outfit he had worn the day before. His bladder was completely full and he was thanking the heavens his body allowed him to wake up in time to go before his bladder just gave in. He had a slight headache and could tell he was still impaired by the alcohol. "Fuck" he muttered tucking himself back into his briefs and washing his hands. Once he got back in the room, he took his jeans off and layed back in the bed. Once his head hit the pillow he was out cold once more.

He awoke later, after the sun had been up for hours already, to a light knock at the door. "Come in" he muttered still half asleep.

Charlotte cracked the door and poked her head in. "Up for a visitor, kid?"

"Who would visit me here?" He asked opening an eye to look at her. She opened the door slightly and noticed Eddie standing next to her. He smiled boldly. "Eddie?"

"Hey Rich" he smiled sweetly. "I brought you some advil. I figured youd have a headache."

"Just when I thought I couldnt adore you anymore then I already do you prove me wrong." He answered pushing himself up into a sitting position. Eddie walked inside then room and took a seat next to Richie on the bed.

"Door stays open." Charlotte stated looked at them seriously. She left

it cracked a few inches and walked away.

“What was that about?” Richie asked taking the advil Eddie extended out to him. His head was killing him. He was so lucky to have someone like Eddie in his life. He picked up the still half full glass of water and threw the pills back.

“She may know we like each other.”

“She may or she does?” Richie asked eyes half squinted.

“Does.”

“Howd she find that out?”

“She heard us talking last night.”

Richie shrugged. “Aunt Chars cool. She wont say anything.”

Eddie nodded in agreement. “I didnt realize you two were that close. She kinda told me last night that you and her talk a lot.”

“Yea. Shes pretty much the mom I always wanted.” Richie commented as he grabbed Eddies upper arm. He started to lay back, pulling Eddie with him. Eddie didnt put up a fight and laid next to him, head on his chest and Richies arm wrapped under the back of his neck, his hand resting on Eddies right shoulder. “I come here a lot when things aren’t that great at home and Aunt Char lets me crash.”

“Thats nice of her.”

“Yea.” Richie agreed. “We talk about a lot of different things. About life. Her parents were kinda like mine growing up. Never knew what mood you would find them in.”

“Did they hit her too?” Eddie asked eyes flicking up to Richies face.

Richie shook his head. “No. They never did that but they always said fucked up shit to her. “

Eddie understood. Abuse wasnt just physically violence. It could be words or it could be neglect, or like in Eddies case it could be over

parenting. In comparison people probably wouldn't see how being smothered could be as bad as being hit, but after years of being told he had sicknesses and countless hospital visits and IVs and needles and testing, he could vouch that he didn't have it easy growing up.

"I know parenting isn't a walk in the park but I don't get how so many are so bad at it."

"Tell me about it" Richie scoffed. "I already know I'm in for it when I get home. Maybe I'll see if I can just stay here again. Sneak in and grab some clean clothes or something."

"Why do you think that?"

"Mom wanted to have a family breakfast today. I'm sure my dad's pissed im MIA."

"He's gonna be that mad that you aren't there for breakfast?"

"He was last time. Honestly I'm the dumbass who let it happen again."

Eddie didn't know how to respond to that. Luckily the subject was changed before he had to.

"I never got to talk to Penny last night."

"I know. It wasn't really the time or place though."

"Yea." Richie agreed. "Im gonna do it today. Call her and ask to meet up with her."

"Are you sure this is what you want?" Eddie questioned.

"Of course" Richie responded pulling Eddie a little closer. "You have no idea how long I've had feelings for you, Eds."

Eddie couldn't help but smile at that. "You're such a sap."

"I can't help my feelings, dipshit." Richie responded furrowing his brows.

“Shh..” Eddie said shushing Richie. He was listening hard. “Someones coming.” Eddie said sitting up quickly and jumping towards the end of the bed. Richie got out as quick as he could, sitting on the edge of the bed grabbing his jeans. He started sticking his legs through the holes and pulling them on.

“You had no pants on that whole time?” Richie didnt say a word, only winked at him. Charlotte knocked twice before sticking her head into the room. “Richie, Pennys here to see you.” She informed them, looking at Richie with one eyebrow raised.

“Thanks.” He smiled. “She can come in.” As Charlotte stood out of the way to allow Penny access, Richie looked at Eddie with wide eyes and nodded his head towards the door. Eddie wasnt sure what he was doing.

“Is your neck ok?” He whispered.

“Hey!” Penny said pleasantly walking into the room.

“Eds, uh, do you mind if me and Penny talk for a second?”

“Yea sure.” Eddie answered pursing his lips together. “Ill just.. be out.. yea” He spoke walking out the door.

Richie patted the spot next to him in the bed indicating for Penny to take a seat. She did.

“Penny..” Richie said with his hands on his lap. He looked at the floor and then back at her.

“How are you feeling today? You scared me last night with the way you werent responding much.”

“Yea.. um, I’m fine. I just...” Richie ran one of his hands through his hair. “We need to talk.”

“Its ok.” Penny responded nonchalantly. “I’m not mad about last night. You dont have to apologize.”

“No Penny its.. its not that.”

“Ok, so what is it?”

“Its us”Richie started. “This isnt..were not.”

“Are you breaking up with me?” She questioned quietly.

Richie didnt answer for a moment, just looked into her eyes. He hated having to do this. Hated being the reason another person was upset. He was a jokster, he made people laugh. Taking someones happiness was just something he hated to be the cause of.

“Yes. Fuck. Yes, penny I’m so sorry.”

Penny stood up. “Are you serious Richie Tozier?”

“I am so so sorry..”

She crossed her arms and looked away for a moment. When she looked back at him she clearly had glossy eyes and was trying to hold back tears. “Can I just know why?” She whispered.

Richie hated this. He hared this so much.

“Is there someone else?” She spoke again.

“You’re an amazing person. I’m just an asshole I guess.”

“So thats the only reason I get?” She raised her voice. “You’re dumping me because you’re an asshole?”

“I— Penny. I’m so sorry. You can do better.”

She nodded in agreement. “You’re right, I can.” She replied before storming out the door. Richie ran out the room after her but she stormed out the front door of the house before he could say anything else. Eddie was seated in the living room and Bev rushed in moments after Penny left.

“I heard yelling.” Bev stated looking around. “Is everything ok?”

“Penny was here.” Richie said. “I ended things with her and she left.” Bev grabbed her jacket off the hook and ran out the door after her.

“Fuck, Eds.” Richie said sitting next to him. “Im such a fucking asshole.”

“No you arent, Rich. If you really didn’t want to be with her anymore you did the right thing.” He placed his hand on Richies knee rubbing his thumb over it in circles.

“I know.” Richie nodded. “I just didn’t want to hurt her.”

“Thats because you arent an asshole” Eddie spoke lightly. “You’re a good guy and you care about other people.”

Richie moved his hand over Eddies and interlocked their fingers. “Thanks.”

Charlotte entered the room drying her hands off with a dishtowel. She looked at the two and leaned her shoulder against the wall. “You did the right thing.” She said. “I know its none of my business but this” she said motioning between the two of them “this would have caused her more pain if you did it while you were still with her and she found out.”

“I know.” Richie agreed.

“Richie..” Charlotte said looking at him. “Your mom called this morning when you were asleep.” Richies body stiffened at the realization of what she said. “She had no idea where you were. Said here was the third spot she tried.”

“I wasnt planning on sleeping out.” Richie commented.

“Im sure you wernt but that doesnt change the fact she was worried. I talked her down but you’re father wanted you to give him a call around 3:00. Said he doesnt want you home until you’ve talked with him.”

“On the phone?” He questioned.

“Id say its a blessing he didn’t want you home right away. Wanting to talk is good and if over the phone is whats best so be it. I dont want you leaving this house and forgetting to call him so you’re stuck here until after you two have spoke.”

Richie nodded. "Thanks."

"You think you can eat something? Toast maybe?"

Richie nodded once more. "Yea, sure. Thanks." She headed off back towards the kitchen.

5. Chapter 5

Waiting for 3 to arrive was literal hell. In the few hours between, Richie had smoked half a pack of cigarettes and could not control his leg from bouncing every time he was seated. Bev had returned to the house not too long after leaving to find Penny.

“Shes ok.” She reassured Richie. “I think she knew it was going to happen but was hoping for the best.”

“I don’t want her to hate me.” He had replied.

“She doesnt.” Bev smiled placing her hand on his shoulder. “She just doesnt understand why you ended things. Just give it time.”

When the phone rang at half past 2, Richie watched Charlotte answer with intense eyes. It was only Audra calling for Bev.

Eddie stayed with Richie the whole time, trying to distract him from whatever he was scared was going to happen. It wasnt working very well.

Just as the clocked turned 3 Richie picked up the telephone. He wanted to make sure he was as punctual as possible, one of his fathers pet peeves was tardiness.

“Tozier residence.” Maggie answered.

“Hey Mom.” Richie spoke softly.

Charlotte shooed Bev and Eddie out of the room to ensure he had some sort of privacy. The two went to Bevs room, whispering about what an asshole Mr. Tozier is.

She sighed into the phone. “Richard you scared me half to death. When I realized both you and your vehicle were not here I didnt know what to think.”

“I know. I’m really sorry about that. I should have called.”

“You’re right. You should have. Do you have any idea what was

going through my mind what with all those children disappearing just a few years ago?”

“I know mom I’m sorry.”

“It’s Richie.” He heard her mention to another person. His body stiffened. The muffled sound of his father taking the phone out of his mothers hand was heard along with Maggie breaking out into tears.

“Rich?”

“Um, yea. H-Hey dad.”

“What the hell were you thinking worrying your mother like that? Are you really that idiotic to just not come home without telling us?”

“I know. I’m sorry. I fucked up.”

Wentworth scoffed. “You missed breakfast you know. The breakfast your mother was nice enough to cook for us both.”

“I didn’t mean to—“

“You didnt MEAN to? Oh well that makes it all better. Doesn’t it honey? Your son didnt MEAN to not come home last night.”

Richie could hear his father getting madder and madder. What was he supposed to do? Tell them he was too drunk to drive last night and they should give him credit for not trying to drive home? That would just piss him off even more.

“Listen.” Wentworth started speaking in an even tone. “You dont want to come home to a warm bed at night? Fine. You dont want to enjoy the nice breakfast your mom took the time out of her morning to cook? Fine. But if you’re not going to be a participant in this family then you are NOT a part of this family. Do you hear me?”

“What are you saying?” Richie asked, voice cracking a little at the end of his sentence.

“I’m taking your mother to dinner and a movie. Were leaving in a moment and when I get back I want your shit gone. You’re on your

own from this point out. Your mother insists you keep the truck. In fact she even insists we even pay your insurance until the end of the school year.” He laughed at the last sentence. “If it was up to me though son, I’d scrap the damn thing. Well be home no later then 7. I dont care where you go, just get your shit out of my house.”

Richie listened to the dial tone of the phone for a moment before placing the phone back onto the receiver. He sat on the floor crossing his arms over his knees and placing his forehead against them. He didnt even notice tears were flowing he just felt them sliding down his arm. Fuck fuck fuck. He lifted his head and wiped the tears off his face. Even though so much just happened all he could think of was a cigarette. He went out to the front steps lighting one and staring out into the distance. He didnt hear the door open shortly after him, too focused on nothing. Every inhale of nicotine he could barely feel. He wouldnt of even known his cigarette was lit if it wasnt for the fact smoke was flowing out of his lungs. He was numb.

A hand was placed on his shoulder bringing him back to reality. He looked to his right to see Charlotte.

“Everything ok?” She asked. He dropped his cigarette and broke down in her arms.

Bev and Eddie could hear Richie who was hysterical from Bevs room. They looked at each other before darting out of her room and into the living room. He was upfront in Charlottes arms as she rubbed his back. She stared daggers at the two and they retreated back away from the window.

“What do you think happened?” Bev whispered to Eddie.

“I have no idea but I’ve never seen Richie like this.”

“Me neither...”

After he had calmed down a bit Richie and Charlotte walked back into the house. Richie went straight towards the bathroom so he could collect himself while Charlotte stopped in front of Bev and Eddie.

“Richies gonna be staying here for a while.” She spoke quiet enough so only they could hear. “That ok with you Bev?”

“Of course.” She answered without even having to think.

“What happened?” Eddie asked.

“His dad doesnt want him home. We have to go grab his stuff in a few minutes.”

“Im coming.” Bev and Eddie stated in unison.

“We’ll help grab his things.” Bev spoke.

Charlotte nodded. “Im gonna follow behind him to make sure everything goes the way it should.”

“Is his dad home?” Eddie questioned.

“He’s not supposed to be..” Charlotte answered.

When Richie finally exited the bathroom his eyes were a little red but other then that there was no real evidence he had just broken down. Bev and Eddie looked at him, neither speaking. “What the hell are you guys looking at” he muttered before brushing by them and out the door.

Eddie didnt know what to say. He sat quietly in the passenger seat with Richie on his way to his house. Bev and Aunt Charlotte followed behind them to help collect his belongings. The silence felt awkward. He should say something shouldnt he? “Im sorry.” Eddie spoke softly. “You’re parents shouldn’t have reacted like this.”

“My family fucking sucks anyway.” Richie spat out.

Eddie remained quiet. Maybe quiet was better. Its not like he could really say anything to make this situation any different. He was just thankful for Bevs aunt. She stepped up for Bev when things got progressively worse at her dads. She took Bev in to keep her safe and let her grow up in a happy home environment. Now she was doing the same for Richie. She did not even hesitate.

When they arrived nobody was home as promised. The four of them went into the house. It didnt take long to gather Richies belongs, after all he didnt need any large items like a dresser or a bed. He grabbed clothes and items he cared about such as yearbooks and pictures before deciding everything else could stay. A piece of him wanted to ruin the house before leaving. Things like ripping down curtains and smashing the living room tv. Better judgement allowed him to decide against it. After putting the last of hist stuff in his truck, not even needing to put anything in Aunt Charlottes car, they took back off towards his new home.

With the help of Eddie and Bev, putting his new room together didn't take very long at all either. No one talked about feelings as they worked, only stories of their childhood.

"How about when Mrs. Parker freaked out on you about paying attention?" Bev laughed. "She swore you were going to fail and you got the highest grade in the class."

"She underestimated me all year." Richie smiled. "The best thing was her face when I finished the final."

"Didnt you finish first?" Eddie asked.

"Yea first one done. She graded it right there too."

"She hated you so much for doing so well. What teacher hates a student for succeeding in their class?" Bev laughed harder.

"She was horrible!" Eddie said shaking his head. "I remember always thinking how bad I felt for her grandkids."

"Seriously! She probably never brought them candy when they came to visit!"

"She was a nightmare." Richie stated. "But arguably better then Mr. Fink."

"Holy shit i forgot about Mr.Fink!" Eddie yelled with wide eyes.

"I dont think I had him. What grade was he?" Bev asked.

“4th” Richie said blandly.

“Youre so lucky Bev. He sucked the fun out of everything!”

“He legit made me stand in the corner so many times” Richie yelled.
“Tried to say its was the only place I wasnt a distraction.”

“Yea but you were more of a distraction when he did that because you’d keep making noises and terrorizing all the kids in the back.”

“Only because you sat in the back.” Richie pointed out.

“Yea, and you were so annoying I hated when hed put you back there.”

“My dearest Eddie, you know you loved when I’d bug you in class.”

“Not when I was trying to pay attention.”

“Anyone who actually tried to pay attention to that guy ended up falling asleep. I did you a favor.”

“So whats your excuse for bugging me now?”

“Is it not obvious that now I’m just after your attention?” He asked winking at Eddie.

“Whatever, Trashmouth.”

Richie flopped back onto the bed while Bev and Eddie finished putting the last box in the closet. “So were pretty much gonna be having a never ending sleepover, Molly Ringwald.”

“Appears to be that way.” She agreed while taking a seat on the end of the bed.

“Gonna be one less stop I have to make on the way to school.”

“Yea.. yea you’re right. Definitely will be.

“I live closer to you now, Eds.” Richie smiled.

“Unfortunately.” He responded.

"I still havn't told Stan I'm here." He said shooting up. "Shit I've gotta call him."

"Im sure he'll understand you were preoccupied." Bev mention.

"No I know. I'll be right back." He yelled exiting his room.

Bev looked in the direction of Eddie. "I told Penny she could come over tomorrow. I feel weird telling her not to come now but like, I dont want Richie to feel weird his first real day here. Ya know?"

Eddie shrugged. "You guys live together now so I'm sure weird situations are gonna come up. Just ask him."

"True.. Do you know anything about why they broke up so suddenly? Things seemed fine earlier in the week."

"No" Eddie spat out. "No why would I know anything? You probably know more then I do about whats going on since ya know your friends with both of them and all. What makes you think I would know whats going on? Thats crazy."

"It was just a question Eddie" She chuckled. "I just— he told me last night that Penny was stopping him from being himself. I've been thinking about that a lot since he said it and I cant decide what it means."

"It came from Richie so it could literally mean anything."

"No I know. He just said it with so much certainty that I feel like it has to mean something."

Richie pushed the door open and resumed laying in the bed like he had before. "He couldnt talk but his moms gonna relay the message." He spoke plopping his arms under his head.

"Whatd you tell her?" Eddie asked thankful for the new change in topic.

"Just that I'm staying at Bevs for a little. Not to call my house. All that bs."

"I should probably go call my mom. Its been hours and I dont want her thinking I'm dead or something."

"Ask if you can sleep out tonight." Richie mentioned. "Say your sleeping at Big Bills and stay here."

"She thought he was sick yesterday. No way shell let me stay there with lingering germs."

"Ok well say Stan or Ben then. She likes them too. I'm gonna need company tonight, Spaghetti. First night in my new house and all."

"Cant Bev keep you company?" Eddie questioned purely for arguments sake.

"Well maybe I want your company." Richie winked. So much for subtle.

"You're so annoying, Trashmouth." Eddie rolled his eyes and left the room for the phone.

Bev looked at Richie, her stare light and friendly. "Richie?" He looked up at her. "I had told Penny should could stop over tomorrow. Did you want me to tell her not to?"

"I want you to do what ever makes you happy, Bev. Mi casa es su casa."

"Literally" she smiled

The first couple weeks were fine. Richie fit in well at his new home but what else would have been expected? Charlotte loved having him there. He helped out around the house when needed and was able to run errands for her when she was not up for it. His and Bevs bond was starting to turn more sister/brotherly, not that it wasnt pretty much that way already. Growing closer was inevitable though beings they literally couldnt get away from each other now. Penny frequently came over and was now on fine terms with him. Richie was able to join in when Bev and Her sat in Bevs bedroom talking about school and other aspects of life. It was almost how things used

to be and he was grateful. Sometimes Pennys eyes lingered a little too long on him but Richie tried not to pay too much attention to that. His grades were fine, mostly A's. And even though he was no longer welcomed home, his mother and him still stayed in contact. Behind is fathers back of course. Phone calls were made multiple times a week. During all of them she always reminded him she loved him. The best part of the last few weeks however had to be his and Eddies relationship. It was a tad awkward at first. The kissing and the touching felt a little guilty to both of them. They were used to always being all over each other but there was never a name to why they were doing what they did. Now that a relationship had been established things just felt different. It felt right though.

Aunt Charlotte allowed Eddie to sleep over every weekend since moving in but there were rules. She was still the only one to know there was anything at all going on between the two.

"I dont like it." She had said the first night Richie asked. "I would never allow Ben and Beverly to share her bed alone in a room over night."

"It's not like were gonna do anything."

"You're both 17 year old hormonal boys and you want me to think nothing would happen?"

"What're you scared about? Someone getting knocked up?" Richie joked which got him an elbow to the ribs from Eddie.

"Shut up" he mouthed at him.

Charlotte narrowed her eyes at them.

"Were not gonna do anything, Aunt Char. Promise. I just kinda need some emotional support right now." He figured trying to play that card might help. How could someone deny a half orphan of his boyfriend in his time of need? It did work.

"Fine." She spoke. "Fine but if I walk in on anything it isn't happening again. Also, door stays unlocked at all times."

"What if I'm getting changed?" Richie argued.

“All. Times.”

“Yes ma’m” Eddie answered, then stared at Richie.

“Yes ma’m.” He agreed. And since that agreement Aunt Char had never caught them doing anything. That doesn't mean they were innocent however.

October 11, 1996 was a Friday. There was an in service day at school therefore, apart from teachers, school was closed for the day. Richie woke up next to Eddie, grabbing him and bringing him closer as they laid down.

“Morning, Chee..” Eddie mumbled barely awake.

“Eds, you look so adorable while you're asleep.” Richie pinched his cheek. Eddie made a face of disgust, comprehending what was happening and swatting Richies hand away.

“Im sleeping, Rich.”

“Yea but its Friday.”

“So what?”

“So Aunt Char has work today.” Richie answered pushing himself up. “And Bev slept out last night.” He said throwing one of his legs over Eddie and sitting on top of him. “And we have the house to ourself.”

Eddie opened his eyes and smiled. “You're such a nerd.”

“C'mon, I've gotta do something with my dick soon or I'm gonna die.”

“You're so dramatic.” Eddie commented bringing one of his hands up and placing it on Richies thigh. “You're lucky you're cute or it'd be harder to tolerate you.”

“Speaking of hard.” Richie grabbed Eddies hand and moved it to feel him. He closed his eyes and moaned as Eddie squeezed. “Can we fuck?”

“Rich..”

“Ok have sex. Make love. Whatever the hell you wanna call it.” He responded grinding his hips against Eddie who clearly was hard himself by this point.

Eddie bit his lip. They slept together fairly quick after being together, last week being their first time. It felt great. Better then what Eddie thought it would be. His only fear after was Richie trying to make this a regular thing so quickly. Their relationship was still pretty new and he didnt want to ruin it by moving too fast. “Are you sure you wanna again already?”

“Uh, yea.” Richie responded like it should have been the most obvious thing in the world. “You’ve obviously never taken your own dick or you’d understand where I’m coming from.”

Eddie rolled his eyes. “No duh, dipshit” he smiled pushing Richie off of him. “Where do you keep the lube again?”

“Sock drawer” Richie smiled in victory.

Eddie hopped of the bed and grabbed it out. “If were gonna do this you should probably take your clothes off.”

“Aye aye, captain.” Richie said reaching for his own shirt and sliding it off over his head. His briefs came off next. “Like what you see, Eds” he grinned as he slowly started stroking himself.

Eddie blushed throwing the lube next to Richie on the bed. “Start working on yourself.” He said before grabbing the hem of his shirt, ready to take it off.

“You’re so demanding.” Richie sarcastically commented as he popped the lid to the lube. He squeezed some out onto a couple of his fingers before sliding one down and sliding it inside himself. His other hand still stroking himself. He watched Eddie as he took off the rest of his clothes and climbed in the bed. “This is such an awkward angle. Can you take over?” He asked retracting his hand back. “You can start with two.”

“You’re so lazy.” Eddie laughed lightly as he snatched the container

of lube from where Richie had tossed it. He ran it across 3 of his fingers, leaving them glistening before he brought his hand to Richie, slowing sliding 2 fingers in. Richie arched his back slightly at the touch.

“Holy shit” he breathed. “Thats such a better angle. Holy shit.”

Eddie curled them inside of Richie causing him to moan. “You’re so loud” he joked.

“Just wait until you stick your cock in.” He smirked back.

Eddie smiled, separating his fingers for a minute before sliding a third one in. Richie whined as he did.

“You ok?”

“Yeah... yeah.” Richie responded already breathless as he adjusted to the new feeling. As Eddie slid them in and out at a steady pace he watched Richie. His body movements, his facial reactions, the noises he made. He was so beautiful. “God dammit Eddie, can you please just put your cock in?”

Eddie was going to seize this opportunity to start bickering with him like he always does but Richie sounded so needy that it sent a wave of heat down his body. He pulled his fingers out and picked up the lube once more, this time lathering his dick with it instead.

“Wait I wanna turn around.” Richie said quickly twisting his body around to where he was on his knees and elbows. He looked back at Eddie with his face laying on the pillow. “Its supposed to feel better this way.”

“Who told you that?” Eddie asking raising his eyebrow.

“Nobody told me anything. I read it in a magazine.”

“A magazine?”

“Yea one of those chick ones. Just shut up and put it in.”

Eddie placed one hand on Richies hip to steady him and with the

other hand helped to guide himself to Richie. "You ready?"

"Fuck Eds just—"

Eddie slid in and Richie made a loud gasping noise cutting himself off.

"Shit are you ok?"

"Just keep moving." Richie answered through closed eyes and gritted teeth. Eddie listened without hesitation. Every time he pushed into him Richie let out a loud pant. "Fuck you feel amazing." Richie said between breaths.

Eddie gripped both sides of Richie's hips and started rocking his body to meet his thrusts half way, causing an even louder noise to escape his mouth.

When Beverly and Penny walked in the house, Bev immediately placed a finger over her mouth and looked at Penny. Penny listened and her eyes went wide. "Is that Richie?" She asked.

Bev quickly nodded her head. "I think so." They stood there and listened to the faint noise for a moment. "Is he always this loud?"

Penny shrugged. "I don't know. We never did anything except make out."

"Really?"

"Yea.. every time I tried anything he told me the mood wasn't right. Probably because he was screwing some other chick the whole time." She threw up her hand in the direction of his room.

"I don't think he would do that. He never mentioned another girl to me and we tell each other everything."

"He's obviously hiding something from you."

"He wouldn't do that."

"Who is she then?"

Bev shrugged. "Maybe we should leave."

"No, C'mon" Penny whispered waving Bev to follow her. They snuck up to Richies door, Penny placing her left ear and Bev placing her right ear on the wood. Both of their eyes wide as they heard Richie let out a whine. "Can you hear anyone else?"

Bev shook her head. "No but I'm totally making fun of him for how loud he is." He whined again and they both couldnt help but laugh lightly.

Penny pouted. "I know Sarah likes him. Do you think hes with her?"

"I dont think so. Hes never talked about her."

"What if I opened the door? We could just look for ourselves.."

"No way. I dont want to see Richie naked."

"I kinda do." Penny smiled.

Bev grabbed her wrist getting ready to pull her away when they heard a muffled whine from in the room. It was clearly Richies voice begging whoever he was with to 'keep fucking him in that spot'.

Both of their mouths dropped.

"C'mere" Bev said waiving for Penny to follow her. They went to Bevs bedroom.

"What the hell did we just hear?" Penny asked.

"Its none of our business."

"Uhm, it is MY business? I've wondered why he dumped me for a month Bev. A month! Only to find out its because he's some queer?"

"Penny" Bev said sternly. "We cant tell anybody about this."

Penny shook her head. "Unbelievable. He left me with no remorse and now I'm supposed to just be ok with this?"

"What are you talking about no remorse? He felt horrible."

“Because he played me? I was just some beard for him. I’m sorry but I’m leaving.” She said pushing past Bev.

“Penny—“ Bev answered chasing her out front.

“No. I just.. I cant. I need to go.” Penny responded looking back once before starting her journey down the street.